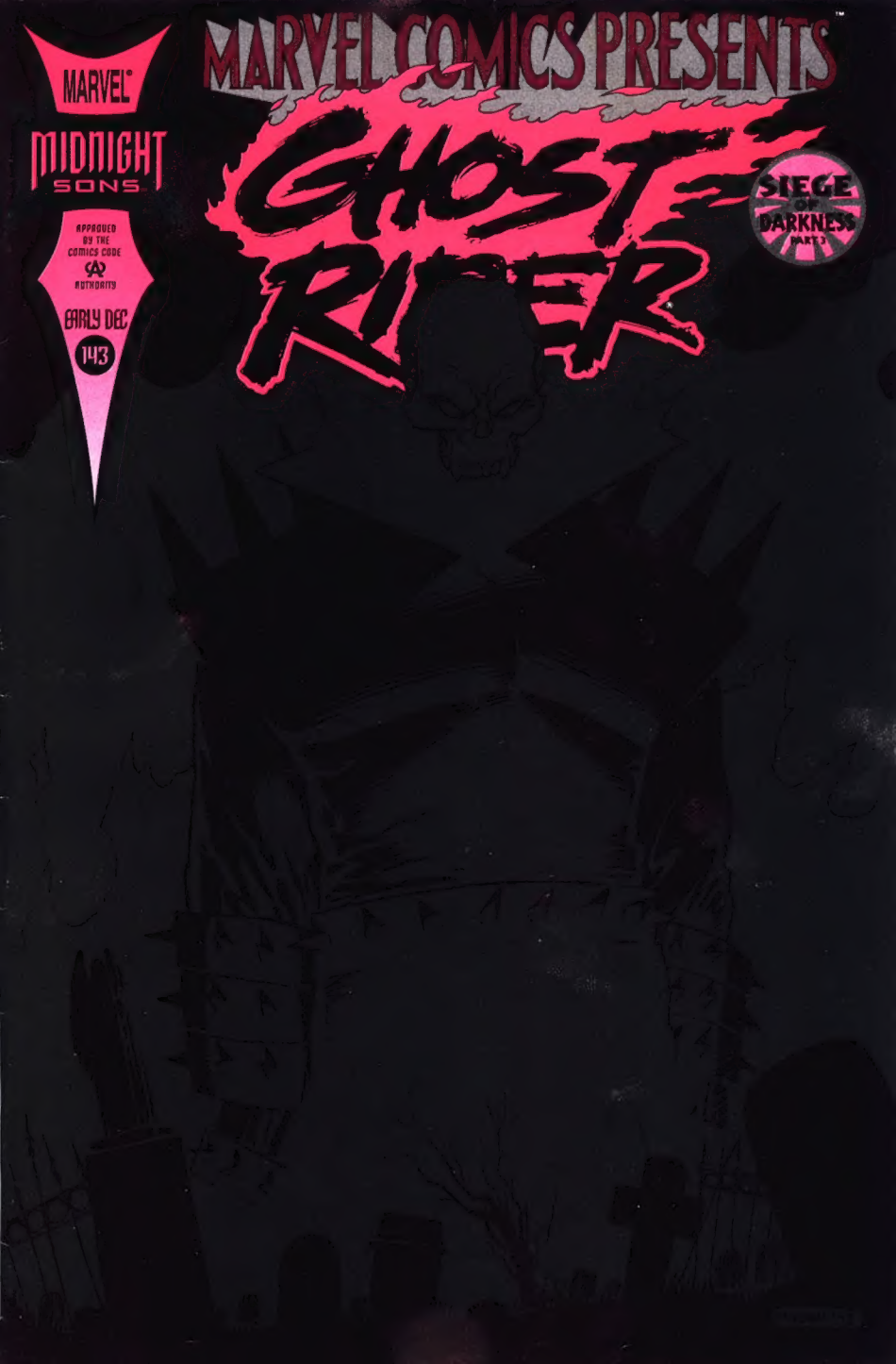
MARVEL
MIDNIGHT SONS
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143
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
GHOST RIDER
SIEGE OF DARKNESS PART 3

MARVEL
MIDNIGHT SONS
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143
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
SCARLET WITCH
SIEGE OF DARKNESS PART 3
DIRECT EDITION
14311
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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

Colin McNeil— COVER
Richard Ashford — EDITOR
Michael Kraiger — ASSISTANT EDITOR
Tom DeFalco — EDITOR IN CHIEF

pg.

GHOST RIDER.....1
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
Part 3
"TREACHERY"

Continuing the SIEGE OF DARKNESS from the pages of **GHOST RIDER 44** and the prelude to the events in **DARKHOLD 15**. Ghost Rider, Blaze and Vengeance bump into Girth, one of the largest of the Lilin menace.

Writer — CHRIS COOPER
Layouts — REGGIE JONES
Finishes — FRED HARPER
Letterer — UL HIGGINS
Colorist — JOE ANDREANI

pg.

WEREWOLF 9
GOBLIN NIGHT
Part 1 of 2
"LITTLE MONSTERS"

Little Lilin find their tricks are no treat when they cross paths with the Lycanthropic Jack Russell

Writer — LEN KAMINSKI
Penciler — JAMES FRY
Inker — REY GARCIA
Letterer — UL HIGGINS
Colorist — MARIANNE LIGHTLE

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MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS featuring GHOST RIDER

c/o Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

Dear Richard and Mike,

Since the last two issues, #138 and #139 came out weekly, I decided to write another mixed letter. The two issues were great, and as for my 75th time writing—I'll be around!! (As for that silver foil...heh, heh).

1) Wolverine: Despite the fact that Doc Sampson and/or the Incredible Hulk seem to be possessed every other month, "Rumble in the Jungle" is shaping into a great story. Chris Marrinan's artwork has always been pretty underrated, so I hope this arc gives him a little time in the spotlight. For an odd reason, though, #139's art looked slightly better. He's also a fine writer, as the dialogue works perfectly despite the weak plotting by Erik Larsen. This tale isn't over yet and the team of Larsen and Marrinan still have time to "wow" me. Overall grades: #138: B. #139: B+.

2) Ghost Rider: Held together by Len Kaminski's story, "Fellow Travelers" is another good tale of the flaming Midnight Son. This space seems to be ripe for these odd pairings, as Ghost Rider vs. the Masters of Silence certainly is. The artwork of Reggie Jones and Fred Harper was a surprise also. While it's too scratchy, Harper surely has a talent well suited to Ghost Rider as this and his covers prove. Len and Fred's story just gets better with every issue and I'll be waiting for future high marks. #138: B. #139: A-.

3) Spellbound: Had I been more familiar with this group of characters, I would certainly enjoy the tale more. MCP's always a great venue for ignored characters, but I'd appreciate a better introduction next time. Bobbie Chase still looks like she's warming up for the story (even after two chapters) while Terry Shoemaker's doing a great art job. All the monsters and cosmic scopes are a credit to Shoemaker as well as inker Carl Potts. I'm even noticing a trace of Gil Kane in Terry's art, so he should be watched closely. This can get better, but isn't that bad to start with. Looking forward to more of Spellbound. Both chapters get overall grades of A.

4) Spider-Man and Batroc: Surprisingly, these two one-shots held their own against the two lead features. Matt Idelson and Malcolm Jones did a great job on Spider-Man, although Matt's script seemed like a mere primer for Deathurge. Thus, the tale read as if it were incomplete and didn't accomplish much. Malcolm obviously did a good job, although his feel is more suited to horror than Spidey. As for Batroc, I enjoyed seeing ze advenzures of zis slightly humorous veelain. His script by ze Mike Lackey was well-done, and I enjoyed ze artvurk by Pedi. Can ve see more of zis screwball French character? Spidey gets a B+ and Bats gets an A.

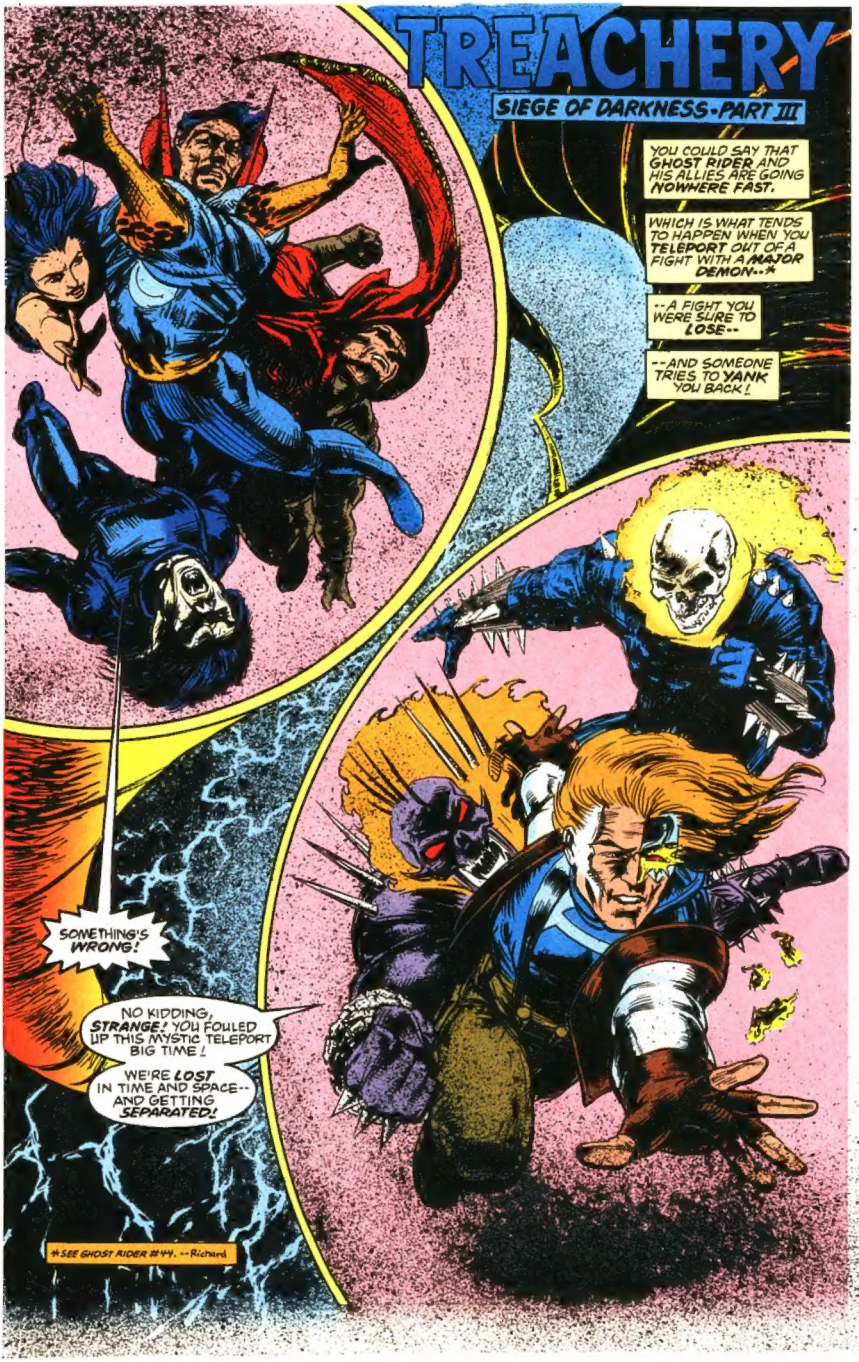
5) Wolvie covers: #138 was an A+, but #139 was a D.

6) Ghosty covers: #138 was also A+, but #139 was also a D!

Thanks for your time, and while the only A+s were on covers, the issues had some extremely fine work which deserves praise, nevertheless. See you in a short 14 days for more MCP fun!

Joey Marchese
P.O. Box 2197
Union, NJ 07083-2197

Chris Marrinan has been hard at work; that's why his work on #139 may seem improved. Check out his work on NOVA, a new series that will hit the stands this November. (It's the guy from NEW WARRIORS, not the sexy herald of Galactus.) His take on Rich Rider will make you shake your booty. As for your cover grades we really liked George Pratt's covers. Although we were some-


TREACHERY
SIEGE OF DARKNESS - PART III
YOU COULD SAY THAT GHOST RIDER AND HIS ALLIES ARE GOING NOWHERE FAST.
WHICH IS WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU TELEPORT OUT OF A FIGHT WITH A MAJOR DEMON--*
--A FIGHT YOU WERE SURE TO LOSE--
--AND SOMEONE TRIES TO YANK YOU BACK!
SOMETHING'S WRONG!
NO KIDDING, STRANGE! YOU FOULED UP THIS MYSTIC TELEPORT BIG TIME!
WE'RE LOST IN TIME AND SPACE--AND GETTING SEPARATED!
* SEE GHOST RIDER #44. --Richard.

IT'S THE LILIN TELEPORTER, PILGRIM! HE'S LOCKED ONTO YOU THREE, TRYING TO BRING YOU BACK TO HIS MOTHER, LILITH--AND ZARATHOS!
THE FOOL! WITH THE CONFLICTING ENERGIES HE'S CREATED--
YOU COULD END UP ANYWHERE!
VENGEANCE--
--BLAZE--
--GHOST RIDER... JUST HANG ON! STAY ALIVE!
I'LL FIND YOUuuuu!
UNF!
QUITE A RIDE, SO WHERE ARE WE?

A BURNT-OUT WAREHOUSE? IT LOOKS LIKE THIS PLACE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LABORATORY ONCE.
SOMETHING ABOUT IT SEEMS ALMOST FAMILIAR...
Y'KNOW, I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING!
WELL, WE CAN'T JUST WAIT AROUND HERE FOR STRANGE TO "PICK US UP"!
AGREED. IF WE ARRIVED HERE THERE MUST BE SOME REASON WE SHOULD EXPLORE--
QUIET!
I HEAR VOICES!
NOT SATISFIED, SKITTER. USE YOUR SPEED AND MOBILITY AND CHECK EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE!
ALL MUST BE IN READINESS! SINCE GHOST RIDER, STRANGE AND THEIR COHORTS ESCAPED...
IT FALLS TO US TO DELIVER THE OTHER GROUP OF MIDNIGHT SONS TO MOTHER AND ZARATHOS!
ULIN!

YOU MAKE ME SICK, GIRTH-- GIVIN' ORDERS WHILE YOU SIT THERE LIKE A SLOB...
ON THE CONTRARY, BROTHER! I'M ACTUALLY QUITE BUSY!
RIGHT NOW, MY DIRECTORIAL POWER IS ACTING AS A HOMING BEACON...
THAT'S WHY WE WERE DRAWN HERE!
...SO THAT THE TRAITOR WE HAVE HIDDEN IN THE SECOND GROUP OF MIDNIGHT SONS CAN LEAD HIS FRIENDS INTO THIS TRAP!
WHAT?!
THEN THE TRAP WILL NEVER BE SPRUNG!
WHO'S THE TRAITOR, YOU FAT SCUM?! WHO HAVE YOU GOTTEN TO?
I'D TALK IF I WERE YOU. THESE TWO CAN BE SO VOLATILE!
THE SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE HERE?!?

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE!
MOTHER WILL BE SO PLEASED WITH ME! INSTEAD OF BRINGING HER GHOST RIDER'S SECOND STRING ALLIES...
IT IS?
... I'LL GIVE HER GHOST RIDER HIMSELF!
DON'T COUNT ON IT, TUBBO.
BLTOOM
AAAGHH!
I HIT GHOST RIDER?! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- I WAS AIMING AT GIRTH!
BLAZE, YOU IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? ATTACK THE LILIN! NOT--
--GHOST RIDER?
KROM
ELSEWHERE...
BY HOGGOTH-- I'VE FOUND THEM!

MEANWHILE...
THIS IS CRAZY! UNLESS--
YOU WILL DIE, GIRTH!
AFTER I BEAT THE TRAITOROUS NAME OUT OF YOU, FATSO!!
VENGEANCE! GHOST RIDER! GIRTH'S DIRECTIONAL POWER IS FOULING UP OUR AIM!
WE'RE ATTACKING EACH OTHER!
THEN I'LL ATTACK IN ALL DIRECTIONS!
THE LINKS OF GHOST RIDER'S CHAIN FLY WITHOUT REGARD TO FRIEND OR FOE.
BUT WHILE HIS FRIENDS DIVE FOR COVER...
...HIS FOE ISN'T QUITE SO AGILE...
NO!
...AND PRESENTS A MUCH BIGGER TARGET.
URK!

A DIMENSIONAL RIFT?
AT LAST! DOCTOR STRANGE TO THE--
--RESCUE?
EXCELLENT, PILGRIM! YOU'VE BROUGHT ZARATHOS AND MYSELF RIGHT TO THEM!
MY PLEASURE, MOTHER.
YOU WERE WISE TO FLEE AND SUMMON US, SKITTER.
YOU WILL BE REWARDED!
TH-THANK YOU!
AS FOR THE SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE...
VROOOOOOOM
VENGEANCE...
YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?
WAY AHEAD OF YOU.
...THERE'LL BE NO ESCAPE THIS TIME!
DON'T COUNT ON IT.

STOP THEM!
LOOK! UP AHEAD!
LET'S HOPE STRANGE GETS IT RIGHT THIS TIME!
I'LL DO MORE THAN HOPE--
KLOOM
I'LL MAKE SURE PILGRIM DOESN'T FOLLOW!
AARGH! MY HAND!
NO!
WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE HOME, GENTLEMEN.
NO TIME FOR PLEASANTRIES, DOC!
BLAZE IS RIGHT! WE MUST FIND A WAY TO WARN MORBIUS AND THE OTHERS--
--THEY HAVE A TRAITOR IN THEIR MIDST.
THE SIEGE CONTINUES IN DARKHOLD #33.

TRICKERTREAT!
THE JERSEY TURNPIKE PUT ME IN MORRISTOWN.
THE CALENDAR GOT ME THERE ON HALLOWEEN.
I'D SPLIT NEW YORK FOR A COUPLE DAYS; I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMEPLACE WITH A MINIMUM OF CONCRETE AND SMOG.
MY GOODNESS!
WHAT A TERRIFYING BAND OF LITTLE GHOULS!
AHAHAHAHA!
QUIT SHOVIN'.
C'MON!
HEY! I GOT A ROCK!
WHAT I FOUND WAS A BUNCH OF
LITTLE MONSTERS!
GOBLIN NIGHT PART ONE
WEREWOLF
YEEP.
SSSKREEETCHH

YOU'RE LUCKY I JUST HAD THE BRAKES FIXED.
MOVE ALONG, NOW.
AND WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING FROM NOW ON.
RARRRGGH!
HEH. PRETTY TERRIFYING.
WANNA SEE SOMETHING REALLY SCARY?
BOO.
!

IAN!
YOU COME AWAY FROM THERE RIGHT NOW!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK TO STRANGERS!
BUT M-M-O-O-O-M!
IF I'VE SAID IT ONCE I'VE SAID IT A MILLION TIMES NOW YOU JUST WAIT TILL YOUR FATHER COMES HOME!!--
SHE WAS RIGHT TO GIVE THE LITTLE GUY HECK.
AFTER ALL, I WASN'T FROM HER TIDY NUMB LITTLE SUCKHOLE OF A TOWN.
I CAME FROM THE BIG BAD WORLD OUTSIDE.
I PROBABLY HAD SIXTEEN KINDS OF DISEASES AND I MIGHT NOT EVEN WASH UP BEFORE DINNER.
WORST OF ALL, I WAS JUST CRAWLING WITH HINTS THAT THERE MIGHT BE MORE TO LIFE--
--THAN WHAT YOU CAN BUY AT THE MALL.

I DIDN'T KNOW IT RIGHT THEN, BUT THERE WERE WORSE THINGS THAN ME IN MORRISTOWN THAT NIGHT.
LOTS WORSE.
C'MON, GUYS--
--WE TAKE THE SHORT CUT TO ELM, WE'LL GET TO OL' LADY BRADBURY'S HOUSE QUICKER!
THINGS THAT CRAWLED OUT OF A DARK MIST THAT WAS BELCHING FORTH FROM ANOTHER WORLD.
HEY-- DJA HEAR SOMETHING?
SCARY THINGS.
HRRARGH!
EEEEEEEE!
NO! NO!

BING BONGG
BING BONGG
BING BONGG
COMING AWREADY.
OY! WELL DID YOU EVER!
YOU'RE ALL SO CA-YOOTE, I SWEAR..
I COULD JUST DIE.
SKLUTCH
KRAPITCH
SKLUBURTCHNATKITPOPIPTCHSKLUB

THERE WA. BLOOD IN THE WIND. LOTS OF IT.
NFF
NFF
IT WAS HUMAN, AND NEARBY.
I DECIDED I'D BETTER CHECK IT OUT.
SKRRTICH
RRRRRRUUMM
SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE KIDS DIDN'T SMELL RIGHT, EITHER.
HEY--
THOP
--LOOK OUT!
THBAP
THUP
BUBUPT

Y' KNOW...
...I TAKE A VERY DIM VIEW OF THIS SORT OF THING.
APPROVE
I
REALLY
DON'T
AT
ALL
IT
IT GIVES THE REST OF US A BAD NAME.

YOU'RE NOT TRICK OR TREATERS. YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN.
WHAT ARE YOU?
GRRHF!
BLUTCH!
HUNGRY!
GUESS WHAT.
YOU JUST WENT ON A DIET.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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what disappointed with our color separations on these two, we'll try to do better next time.

Dear Richard and Mike,

After I read the Spider-Man "Deathurge" story in MCP #138, I really had to write and tell you what I thought of Matt Idelson's story. Idelson has Spider-Man actually thinking euthanasia might be okay! Has Idelson ever read or seen Spider-Man's origin? Have you guys?

Thirty-some years ago, Peter Parker's Uncle Ben died because Peter Parker "did not want to get involved." Spider-Man learned that with great power comes great responsibility. He also learned that one cannot allow evil to run unchecked because people will be hurt and killed. Spider-Man has made it a point not to kill his foes (unlike the Punisher) because he believes that all life is sacred, even the lives of super villains and other murderers. The idea that euthanasia is even remotely acceptable to him flies against the core values that make Peter Parker Spider-Man.

Nobody was told that life was fair, always fun and never painful. Sometimes the pain of one person can allow others to put their lives in a better perspective and will be happier because they are reminded that there are still valuable and good things in life. The people suffering will have their pain lessened because it is shared pain and somebody has benefited from it.

Euthanasia is the coward's way out of life. If you decide for any reason that life is not worth living because you are ill and kill yourself, it is suicide. If someone else is responsible for the lethal act, it is homicide. Suicide is self-inflicted murder.

Hitler felt that some nationalities were so sub-human that it was "merciful" and necessary to wipe them off the face of the world. Euthanasia on a large scale is also called genocide. If you disagree with my "merciful" label, please remember that he wanted them dead as neatly and as quickly as possible. The same reason most people use for supporting euthanasia: "I want to avoid suffering and have people remember me in my prime."

I cannot wait for Marvel Comics to publish a story advocating euthanasia for people with terminal illnesses. You should get some interesting letters from people with AIDS, ALS, cancer, etc., saying how glad they are that Marvel Comics wants them to kill themselves to avoid suffering the pain that is coming in the days ahead. Maybe you guys should go back and rethink these ideas you have about euthanasia. While there is still life, there is hope. It is a concept that Edgar Rice Burroughs used often in the John Carter, Warlord of Mars, series. Maybe you should try it sometime soon.

Paul F. Woida
8224 Pillsbury Ave., S. #2
Bloomington, MN 55420

A character debating this kind of choice is not Marvel Comics saying this is what we believe in. A well-developed character has realistic (hopefully) thoughts and feelings. It seems to us that Spidey is a sympathetic guy who is able to look at both sides of the issue, to empathize if he cannot understand. You should read your histories of Edgar Rice Burroughs more thoroughly. He wasn't against using certain unnamed substances to kill a little pain.

Matt's story was about wrestling with a dilemma. We would like to know if this story affected others out there and how.

And Paul, do you believe in free will?

SCARLET WITCH

Colin McNeil — COVER
Richard Ashford — EDITOR
Michael Kraiger — ASSISTANT EDITOR
Tom DeFalco —EDITOR IN CHIEF

pg.
SCARLET WITCH..... 1
DIGITAL TERROR!
Part 1 of 2

Wanda is confronted by the Lilin, Pixil, within the ordered chaos of the Cyber-realm!

Writer — CEFN RIDOUT
Artist — CHARLES ADLARD
Letterer — WOODROW PHOENIX
Colors — WOODROW PHOENIX

pg.
DEVIL-SLAYER.....9
"OUT OF TIME, IN THE TIME OUT HOTEL"

Eric Simon Payne, a desperate man, a man on the run, hiding from the demons that lurk within a bottle, as well as those that burst forth from the most unexpected places!

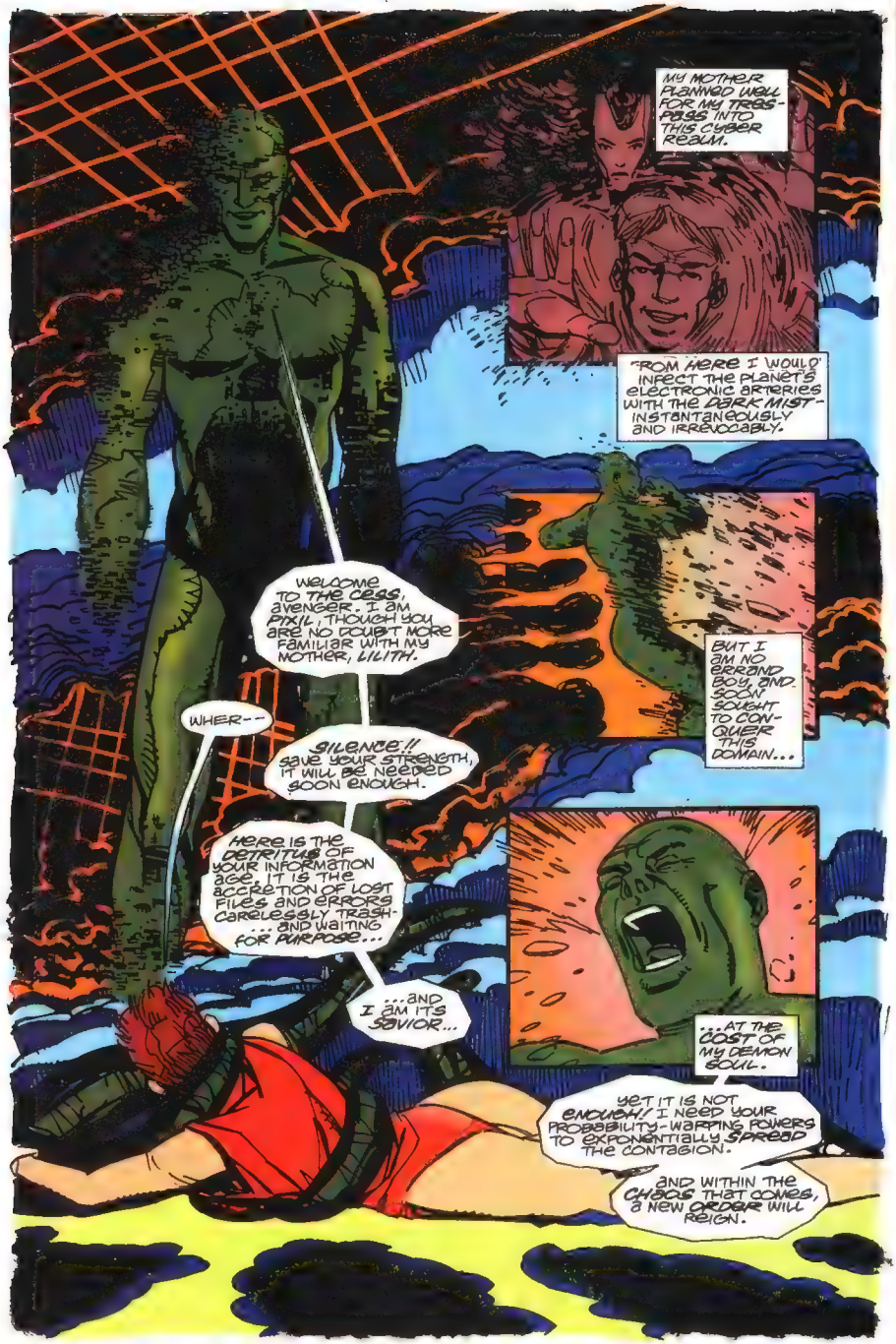
Writer — JON BABCOCK
Penciler — DARREN AUCK
Inker — SCOTT KOBLISH
Letterer — JON BABCOCK
Colorist — KRAIG MICHAELS

This issue we are trying something a little different with **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS**; for the first time we are devoting the whole of this and the next three issues to being part of a crossover - not just on the periphery, but right in the middle. If you don't pick up **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS** , then you are missing an essential part of the MIDNIGHT SONS and THE SIEGE OF DARKNESS. Not only are we bringing you the stories but we are also bringing you the regular creators who have contributed so much to the success of the MIDNIGHT SONS.

Plus those **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS** extras - an extra fully enhanced cover, an extra issue a month and extra pages.Who could ask for anything more.

REGARDS,
RICHARD

WEST COAST AVENGERS H.Q.
CUTE. DOES IT DO DRESS DESIGNS AS WELL?
VERY FUNNY. WHAT DO YOU THINK, JANET? TOO REVEALING?
LEAVES LESS TO THE IMAGINATION THAN THAT DOODLE UP THERE. WHAT IS THAT THING, ANYWAY?
IT'S CALLED A STRANGE ATTRACTOR. IN SIMPLE TERMS IT REPRESENTS ORDER WITHIN CHAOS. BEAUTIFUL, DON'T YOU AGREE?
LOOKS PRETTY CREEPY TO SIMPLE OLD ME...
....AND THE ONLY THING IT'S ATTRACTING IS TROUBLE. LOOK!
JANET, GET HELP!! NOW!!
WANDAAA!!
NOOOO!!!

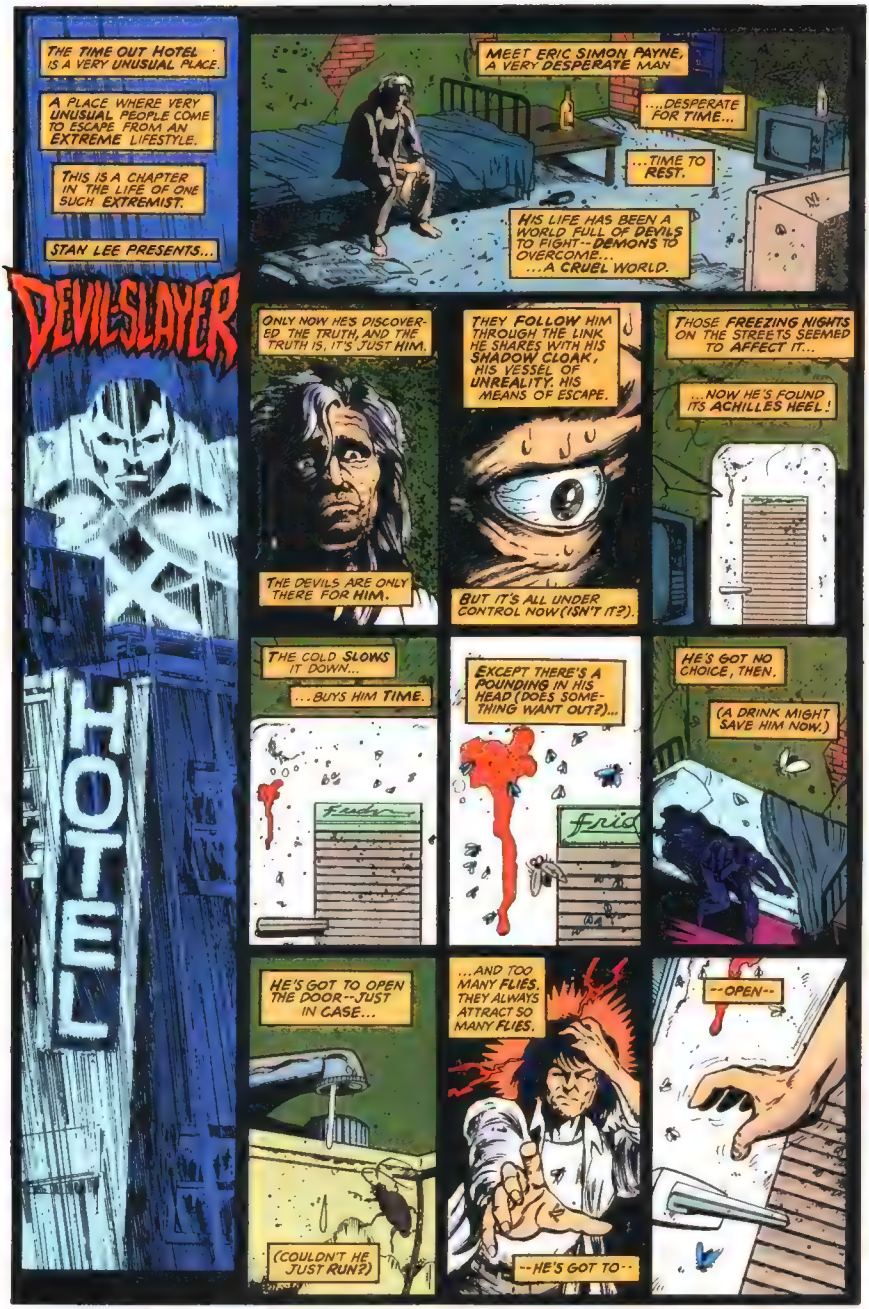

MY MOTHER PLANNED WELL FOR MY TRESPASS INTO THIS CYBER REALM.
FROM HERE I WOULD INFECT THE PLANET'S ELECTRONIC ARTERIES WITH THE CYBER-MIST - INSTANTANEOUSLY AND IRREVOCABLY.
BUT I AM NO ERRAND BOY, AND SOON SOUGHT TO CONQUER THIS DOMAIN...
WELCOME TO THE CESS, AVENGER. I AM PIXIL, THOUGH YOU ARE NO DOUBT MORE FAMILIAR WITH MY MOTHER, LILITH.
WHER--
SILENCE!! SAVE YOUR STRENGTH, IT WILL BE NEEDED SOON ENOUGH.
HERE IS THE DETRITUS OF YOUR INFORMATION AGE. IT IS THE ACCRETION OF LOST FILES AND ERRORS CARELESSLY TRASH- ... AND WAITING FOR PURPOSE...
...AND I AM ITS SAVIOR...
...AT THE COST OF MY DEMON SOUL.
YET IT IS NOT ENOUGH! I NEED YOUR PROBABILITY-WARPING POWERS TO EXPONENTIALLY SPREAD THE CONTAGION.
AND WITHIN THE CHAOS THAT COMES, A NEW ORDER WILL REIGN.

NOT WHILE I BREATHE, FIEND!
THE DECISION IS NOT YOURS, MUTANT!
FOOL! YOUR ERRANT ABILITIES ARE USELESS WITHOUT ME. I AM THE INTER-FACE HERE!
AAARGHH!
C'MON! REMEMBER WHAT CAP SHOWED YOU!
THAT APPROACH IS EQUALLY FUTILE.
EITHER YOU CO-OPERATE, OR I SIMPLY DELETE THE PROTECTIVE SHIELD AROUND YOU AND DOWNLOAD YOUR ESSENCE INTO THE CESS.
THE FORMER IS LESS...DISRUPTIVE, I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE. WHATEVER - THE OUTCOME WILL BE THE SAME.

YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME, DEMON!
HAVE YOU THE APPETITE FOR THIS?
KIZHHT!
UNGH! IS THAT YOUR BEST, WOMAN? SOME PALTRY FEEDBACK? PAH, I EXPECTED MORE FROM A NEXUS BEING.
PERHAPS I HAVE OVERESTIMATED YOU! PERHAPS THAT CRONE HARKNESS WOULD BE MORE TO MY TASTE?
LEAVE HER BE, MONSTER. SHE HAS NO PART IN THIS!

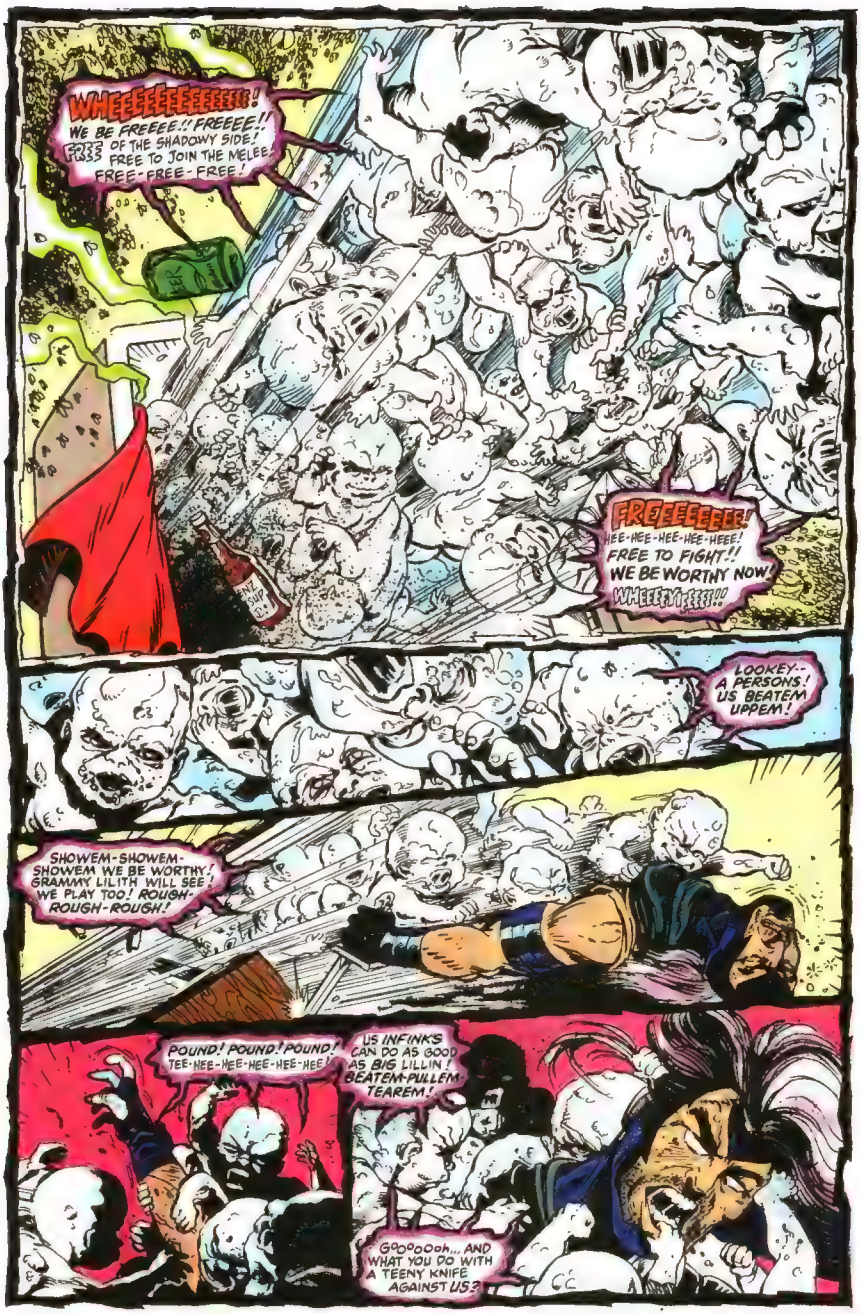
MONSTER AM I? YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RISIBLE!
LET ME STRIP AWAY SUCH ENFEEBLING NOTIONS. LET ME... EMPOWER YOU!
YOUR MUTANT ENERGIES CANNOT BE CONTAINED BY THIS FLIMSY SKEIN OF FLESH. NOR SHOULD YOUR THOUGHTS BE GOVERNED BY SUCH UNRELIABLE NEURAL NETWORKS.
YOU WILL SOON SLOUGH OFF THIS SUPERFLUOUS BIOLOGY, THEN YOUR POWER WILL BE MINE - AND THE AGE OF CHAOS CAN BEGIN!
TH...TH ...THERE!
SUCH GUILE IS BENEATH EVEN YOU, WITCH!
WHAT?!
IT CAN'T BE! IS THIS ONE OF YOUR TRICKS AVENGER!?
"NO!...UHH.. THIS IS YOUR OWN HANDIWORK DEMON...UHH.. FOR IF THIS IS YOUR VISION OF HELL, THEN SURELY THIS IS...

!.. THEE DEVIL ITSELF!!!


THE TIME OUT HOTEL IS A VERY UNUSUAL PLACE.
A PLACE WHERE VERY UNUSUAL PEOPLE COME TO ESCAPE FROM AN EXTREME LIFESTYLE.
THIS IS A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF ONE SUCH EXTREMIST.
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
DEVIL-SLAYER
HOTEL
MEET ERIC SIMON PAYNE, A VERY DESPERATE MAN
...DESPERATE FOR TIME...
...TIME TO REST.
HIS LIFE HAS BEEN A WORLD FULL OF DEVILS TO FIGHT--DEMONS TO OVERCOME... ...A CRUEL WORLD.
ONLY NOW HE'S DISCOVERED THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH IS, IT'S JUST HIM.
THE DEVILS ARE ONLY THERE FOR HIM.
THEY FOLLOW HIM THROUGH THE LINK HE SHARES WITH HIS SHADOW CLOAK, HIS VESSEL OF UNREALITY, HIS MEANS OF ESCAPE.
BUT IT'S ALL UNDER CONTROL NOW (ISN'T IT?).
THOSE FREEZING NIGHTS ON THE STREETS SEEMED TO AFFECT IT...
...NOW HE'S FOUND ITS ACHILLES HEEL!
THE COLD SLOWS IT DOWN...
...BUYS HIM TIME.
EXCEPT THERE'S A POUNDING IN HIS HEAD (DOES SOMETHING WANT OUT?)...
HE'S GOT NO CHOICE, THEN.
(A DRINK MIGHT SAVE HIM NOW.)
HE'S GOT TO OPEN THE DOOR--JUST IN CASE...
(COULDN'T HE JUST RUN?)
...AND TOO MANY FLIES. THEY ALWAYS ATTRACT SO MANY FLIES.
--HE'S GOT TO--
--OPEN--

--NOTHING!
NOTHING BUT THE SHADOW CLOAK. HIS OWN PERSONAL LITTLE ADVENTURE GONE MAD.
NO. NOT MAD. FOR THE CAPE IS QUIET NOW, RESTING...
...JUST AS HE SHOULD REST AS WELL.
EXCEPT IN HIS HANDS...
...REALITY SHIFTS...
...AND THE ONCE DULL AND DRAB BECOMES COLD, HARD STEEL.
FOR HIM ALONE.
THIS IS WHAT MAKES HIM DIFFERENT--WHAT MAKES THEM WANT HIM (ISN'T IT?). THIS IS WHY IT NEVER ENDS...
...AND HE NEVER RESTS.
Tequila ESPECIAL
GULK
HE SHOULD BE TIRED--IT'S BEEN DAYS SINCE HE'S SLEPT--MONTHS SINCE THIS WHOLE ORDEAL BEGAN.
(BUT WHY SO MANY FLIES? WHY THE SONIC HEADACHE?)
A DRINK WOULD CURE IT.
THEY CAN'T GET OUT--IT'S IN THE REFRIGERATOR, AFTER ALL!
AND HE SHOULD BE TIRED (MAYBE A DRINK?).
Tequila ESPECIAL
NO--JUST SLEEP (HE SHOULD BE TIRED)--
--AND HIS HEAD IS ON FIRE...
...AND...
Tequila ESPECIAL

AND HE DREAMED.
HE DREAMED THE FACES OF STARVING CHILDREN...
... ABOUT CLOUDS OF MUSTARD GAS AND THE TASTE OF AGENT ORANGE...
... OF THE BLACK CLOUD WHICH LIFTED FROM CORY'S STILL FORM AS HE DREW NEAR.
HE DREAMED OF THE FACE OF THE DEVIL HIMSELF.
HE DREAMED OF THE TELLTALE SIGN OF HELL'S MINIONS.
HE DREAMED OF FLIES.
WHEN HE AWOKE IT WAS AS IF IN THE DREAM-- HE WAS ONLY DIMLY AWARE OF WHAT THE POUNDING IN HIS HEAD MEANT...
...THE PSYCHIC NUDGE, WARNING HIM OF DANGER-- TELLING HIM THAT EVERYTHING HAD GONE WRONG.
HE COULDN'T EVEN CONTROL HIS SHAPE.
THE BOTTLE HAD BEATEN HIM AGAIN.
THE DEMON ALCOHOL.
NO!
AS THE DOOR OPENS, AND HE FEELS PANDORA'S ICY BREATH--HE REALIZE HIS ERROR...
...HIS VAST ARRAY OF WEAPONS ARE STILL INSIDE!

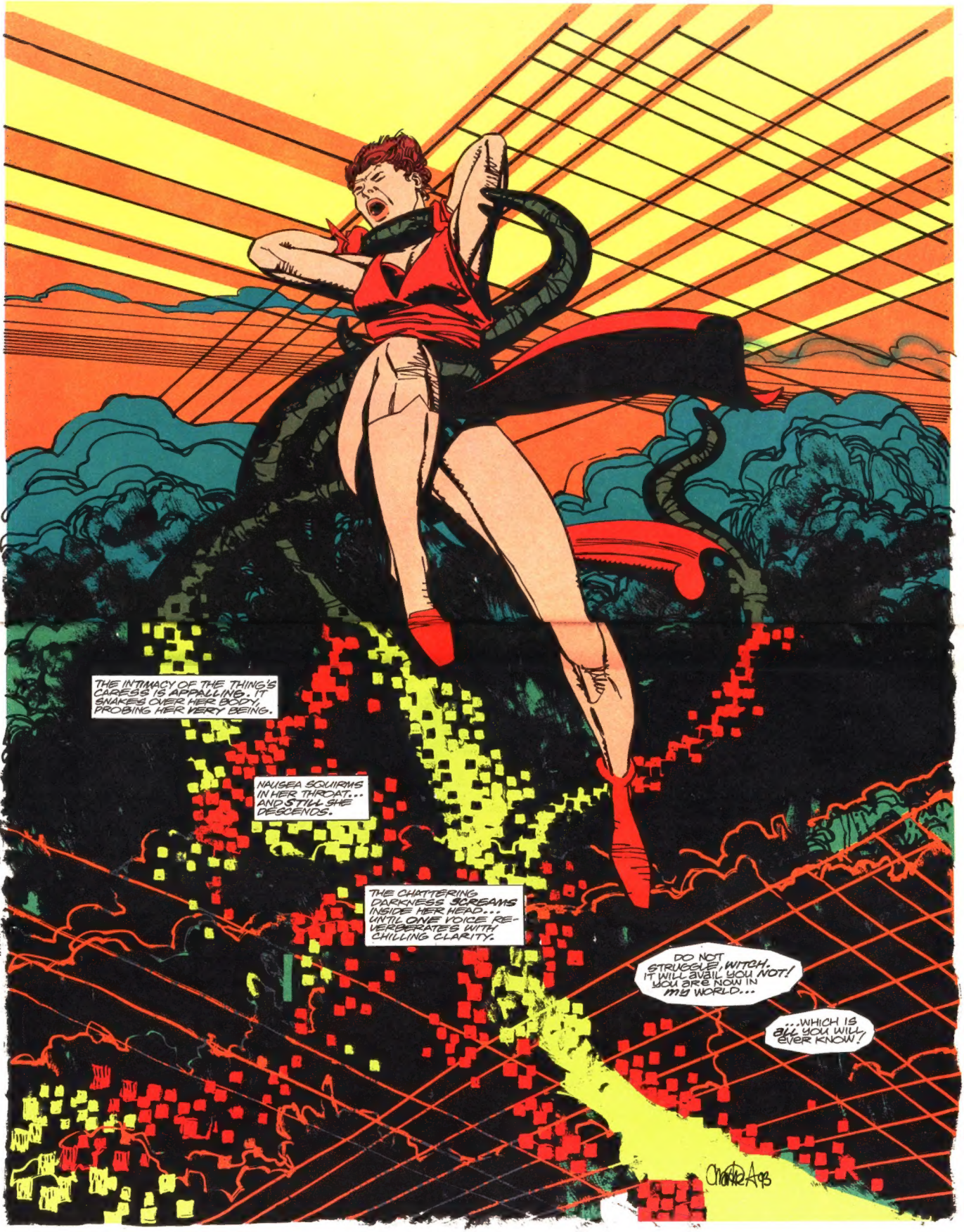

WHEEEEEEEEEEEE!!
WE BE FREEEE!! FREEEE!!
FREE TO JOIN THE MELEE!
FREE-FREE-FREE!
FREEEEEEEE!
HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEEE!
FREE TO FIGHT!!
WE BE WORTHY NOW!
WHEEEEYEEEE!!
LOOKEY-- A PERSONS! US BEATEM UPPEM!
SHOWEM-SHOWEM-SHOWEM WE BE WORTHY! GRAMMY LILITH WILL SEE! WE PLAY TOO! ROUGH-ROUGH-ROUGH!
POUND! POUND! POUND! TEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE!
US INFINK'S CAN DO AS GOOD AS BIG LILLIN! BEATEM-PULLEM-TEAREM!
GOOOOOOH... AND WHAT YOU DO WITH A TEENY KNIFE AGAINST US?

YA!EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
INFINKS? INFANTS? DEMON-BABIES?
THIS IS INSANE! I WON'T ALLOW YOU ENTRANCE TO MY WORLD--NOT AT ALL!
THE SHADOW CLOAK IS NO TOY FOR THE CHILDREN OF DEVILS...
IT IS A LIVING WEAPON!
AIEE!
AIEE!
AIEE!
AIEE!
AND NOW IT SHALL BE THE MEANS OF YOUR DESTRUCTION!
NO-NO-NO-NO-NO! WE STAY TOGETHER! WE INFINKS STRONG THAT WAY! WE BEAT YOU! YOU SEE! WE-

--BEAT YOU--? LOOKIT! HE CLOSING THE PORTAL--SQUEEZIN' US TIGHT! BAD-BAD-BAD! CUTS US OFF FROM THE HIVE! DON'T LET GO! NO--KILLEM-KILLEM-KILLEM!
YES...
KILL THEM...
...KILL THEM ALL!

WAAAAAAAA! RUN AWAY!!
YES, RUN! NO MORE SURPRISE DEMONS! NO MORE DEVILS FROM MY CLOSET! ONLY DEATH OR VICTORY FROM NOW ON!
RUN AWAY!
RUN AWAY!
SO RUN, DEVIL-SPAWN!
SQUIRM YOUR WAY BACK TO YOUR FOUL BREEDERS...
WAAAAIEEEEEEEEEEES!
...BACK TO HELL!
GLK

IT'S OVER. ANOTHER DEVIL SLAIN AND PANDORA IS BACK IN HER BOX FOR ANOTHER DAY. ANOTHER DAY FOR THE DEVIL-SLAYER TO TRY TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER--TO FIND OUT WHAT WENT WRONG.
HE WAS WRONG ABOUT THE COLD--WRONG ABOUT THE CLOAK--WRONG ABOUT--
--ABOUT HIS LIFE?
NO. FOR THE DEVILS WILL RETURN TOMORROW. THEY ALWAYS DO. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.
HE WAS WRONG ABOUT THE BOTTLE...
...IT NEVER SEEMS TO LEAD TO A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP...
...THERE'S ALWAYS A POUNDING IN HIS HEAD THE NEXT MORNING.
BAM BAM BAM
--EY, YOU!--
--T'S--OING--ON--
--THERE?--PEN UP!
YEAH, YEAH, DON'T TELL ME--YOU FELL DOWN. I'VE HEAR THAT ONE EVERY SINGLE DAY. Y'KNOW IT'S AFTER MIDNIGHT. THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO SLEEP HERE NOW AND THEN.
A WHACKO. I'M SURVIVIT.
NOT EVERYONE AT TIME OUT DESTROYS HIS ROOM, Y'KNOW. JUST WHAT...WHAT'N'SAM HILL HAPPENED IN HERE, ANYWAYS?
YOU DO THIS ALL BY YERSELF?
UHMM...
...
LOOKS LIKE ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE IN HERE.
THIS FRIDGE IS THE ONLY THING LEFT STAND--
I WOULDN'T OPEN THAT DOOR IF I WERE YOU. I HAD A TERRIBLE TIME GETTING IT SHUT AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO TRY AND DO IT AGAIN.
YEAH?
NOW WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN--?
FIN?


THE INTIMACY OF THE THING'S CARESS IS APPALLING. IT SNAKES OVER HER BODY, PROBING HER VERY BEING.
NAUSEA SQUIRMS IN HER THROAT... AND STILL SHE DESCENDS.
THE CHATTERING DARKNESS SCREAMS INSIDE HER HEAD... UNTIL ONE VOICE RE-VERBERATES WITH CHILLING CLARITY.
DO NOT STRUGGLE, WITCH. IT WILL AVAIL YOU NOT! YOU ARE NOW IN MY WORLD...
...WHICH IS ALL YOU WILL EVER KNOW!